

# News story: 'Forward Ladies' entrepreneur Etta Cohen honored

Etta Cohen founded '[Forward Ladies](#)' in 1999. She began her organisation by meeting with locally employed women and women who had founded their own businesses. 'Forward Ladies' now supports more than 1,300 business women across the country and hosts more than 300 events a year.

The honour has been given as the world recognises International Women's Day on 8 March, where the social, economic, cultural and political achievement of women is celebrated.

Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility Margot James said:

This honour is a tribute to Etta's outstanding commitment to raising the profile of women in the work place.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day this week, it's important to remember how much more successful our economy is thanks to the increased contribution of women.

We need more women making decisions at the top of business, and people like Etta have the drive and vision to help make that happen.

The name 'Forward Ladies' was suggested for Etta's group because it reflects her determination to develop and encourage women from all levels of professional life. She has worked tirelessly to organise training days, talks from inspirational business speakers and networking events to grow her organisation into the success it is today.

Now with a small team behind her, the sustainable business supports 13,000 business woman and runs more than 350 events a year from trade missions to networking events.

She also promotes diversity and equality at both regional and national levels working closely with key government agencies. 'Forward Ladies' operates across 10 UK regions and believes that women from all cultures should play in the building of future prosperity. Etta sits on a range of boards across different industries, notably the Yorkshire Asian Business Association (YABA).

The ceremony was conducted this week at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

An OBE is a Queen's honour given to an individual for a major local role in any activity such as business, charity or the public sector. OBE stands for

Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

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## [News story: Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial unveiled in London](#)

The new Memorial recognises the contributions of the UK Armed Forces and all UK citizens who deployed in the Gulf region, Iraq and Afghanistan from 1990-2015, and those who supported them back home.

At 1100 am, a Service of Dedication was conducted from a specially constructed Drumhead on Horse Guards Parade with The Queen, Prime Minister Theresa May and the Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, in attendance. They were joined by His Royal Highnesses The Duke of Edinburgh, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince Henry of Wales and other Members of the Royal Family. Readings were given by Prince Henry and a Ministry of Defence Civil Servant Victoria Whittaker who deployed to Afghanistan in 2014.

Following the Drumhead Service, the Memorial was formally unveiled at a short ceremony in Victoria Embankment Gardens, in front of the Ministry of Defence, where Her Majesty The Queen met a small number of civilian and military guests who contributed to the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, and Memorial Trustees. Prior to leaving, Her Majesty was presented with a posy by two-year-old Alfie Lunn whose father Serjeant Mark Lunn, 29, deployed to Iraq in 2007 and was awarded a Military Cross for his actions during a fire-fight in Basra. Alfie's mother, Corporal Michele Lunn, deployed to Afghanistan in 2014/15.

Speaking after the event, Alfie's father Serjeant Mark Lunn said:

I'm incredibly honoured to be here today and especially proud to see our son Alfie present a posy to The Queen. This memorial is a wonderful way to recognise the duty and service of so many military and civilians.



HM The Queen presented with a posy by two-year-old Alfie Lunn. Crown Copyright.

Designed by sculptor Paul Day, the Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial is positioned nearby monuments to the Second World War and the Korean War.

The new Memorial features two large stones – one representing Iraq and the other Afghanistan – linked by a giant, two-sided bronze tondo depicting the Memorial's theme of "Duty and Service". The Memorial gives equal prominence to military and civilian contributions, including, amongst others, the delivery of healthcare and humanitarian work. It is specifically intended to be inclusive of all those who contributed and therefore bears no names.

Between 1990 and 2015, thousands of British citizens put themselves in harm's way, protected our nation's interests, helped those in danger and worked to improve the lives of those in other countries. 682 Service personnel lost their lives in the three conflicts. Civilians from a vast breadth of organisations worked for more than two decades in areas such as aid distribution, education, healthcare and governance to help the citizens of both Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Queen was joined by over 2,000 people for the event, and guests were representatives of the many groups, military and civilian, including current Service personnel, veterans, Civil Servants and aid workers, whose efforts are marked by the Memorial, and also families of the fallen.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The missions in Iraq and Afghanistan called on hundreds of thousands of our military and civilian personnel to put their lives on the line in a heroic effort to help secure greater peace and stability in some of the most hostile environments that we have ever known. Today we honour the extraordinary courage and dedication of every one of those British men and women who stepped forward to answer that call. We pay tribute to those families who spent long periods apart and we stand with the friends and families of all who lost loved ones.

Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon said:

It is vital that we recognise our Armed Forces and civilians who contributed, both abroad and at home, to the campaigns in the Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. Today's service is an appropriate occasion to honour their immense efforts and sacrifices. We should also reflect on the continued service of the men and women of our Armed Forces deployed around the world today to help make us safer at home.



The Queen, Prime Minister Theresa May and the Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, were in attendance. Crown copyright.

The idea of creating a national Memorial commemorating the UK's military operations and reconstruction efforts, from the liberation of Kuwait in 1990 through to the end of combat operations in Afghanistan, originated in spring 2014 and was supported by the Government. A board of Trustees, whose Chairman

is former Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Stirrup, ran the project, which has Government backing and financial support from LIBOR funding and Sun readers. The unveiling was organised by the Ministry of Defence, on the Trustees' behalf, in partnership with The Royal British Legion, which hosted a reception after the service.

The combined events that the memorial covers represent the longest post-war continuous overseas deployment of UK forces (excepting garrison duties), and the most intensive extended period of operations undertaken since the Second World War.

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## [News story: DFID staff attend unveiling of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial](#)

Today, twenty DFID staff who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan joined the International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, and over 2,500 other British citizens and military personnel at the unveiling by Her Majesty The Queen of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial in London.

The DFID staff selected were invited to represent all DFID staff who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Priti Patel met the group ahead of the ceremony and said:

Today we recognise all those who served in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf, both military and civilian. The whole country can be proud of these brave men and women who, without a moment's hesitation, deployed to some of the world's most dangerous places.

We rightly commemorate their achievements – in terms of protecting Britain's security and improving the lives of people caught up in conflict.

Here we profile just a few of the DFID staff who attended the ceremony on behalf of their colleagues.

### **Wendy Phillips**

Wendy has conducted 3 separate DFID tours of Afghanistan, and is DFID's representative to meet Her Majesty The Queen as part of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial unveiling ceremony. Originally from Nunhead in South East London, Wendy now lives in Stowmarket.

In 2003, Wendy was Deputy Head of DFID's office in Kabul for a period of 18

months.

In 2005, she went back to Afghanistan as part of the command structure in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Helmand, working alongside UK and international military colleagues to improve security for development agencies to enable them to work in Helmand.

Since 2014 Wendy has been back in Afghanistan again, looking after the day-to-day running of DFID's office and the welfare of its staff. She is due to retire at the end of 2017.

Commenting on being invited to the memorial ceremony, Wendy said:

I was so surprised but pleased to be invited today; I've flown back especially for it. Being recognised in this way after a 41 year career in DFID is incredibly humbling.

I think that it is right we are commemorating the efforts of all those who worked in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf, not just the military but the civilians too. With operations of that scale, there are so many people involved, and still are today. Everyone who took part was a cog in a much bigger wheel; everyone had an important role to play, and it is right and proper that we've marked that down in history.

In Afghanistan we knew it was going to be tough and we knew change would be incremental. But we are in it for the long haul and we are starting to see real reform in the country.

UK support has helped to ensure more than 7.2 million children now attend school, 39% of who are girls, and the Government of Afghanistan are also making more positive commitments, changing the way they operate for the better which will make the biggest difference of all.

Wendy's son, Corporal Phillips of the Army Air Corps, attended the event with her. Corporal Phillips has also conducted 3 tours of Afghanistan.

### **Christa Rottensteiner**

Christa was born in Vienna, Austria, but lives in Clapham, London. She has worked in DFID for 11 years, and was posted in Afghanistan from 2012-2013 as DFID's local government team leader.

Christa oversaw the delivery of DFID programmes that supported local authorities to deliver basic services such as water, drainage systems, waste collection and electricity, to people in remote parts of Afghanistan. She also worked on projects that improved Afghanistan's local governance structure, making it more effective and efficient.

Reflecting on her time in Afghanistan, Christa says:

My lasting memories are of speaking to committed, fearless women who are making a difference despite the difficulties. I feel privileged to have been able to work in Afghanistan alongside so many committed DFID Afghan staff.

### **Adam Farley**

Adam is originally from Cornwall and went to school in Plymouth. From 2013-2014 he was the Infrastructure Programme Manager in DFID Afghanistan, overseeing programmes that gave Afghans better access to power, safer and more modern roads and a freight railway in the north to help increase trade with its regional partners.

The projects that Adam worked on helped to connect more villages and towns, which meant that more people could reach the services they desperately needed. Creating formal roads also increased safety and as part of the wider project, DFID helped train local workers to maintain what had been initiated.

Speaking ahead of the memorial ceremony, Adam said:

I wanted to come today and pay my respects. I am pleased that both civilians and members of the military are acknowledged with this memorial. We often, quite rightly, commemorate the military for their brave and selfless acts, but this has been a real team effort and recognising the joined up endeavour is right and proper.

None of us had to go to Afghanistan, we choose to because we wanted to make a difference in our own way.

### **Helen Jones**

Helen (far left in picture above) was born in Ealing, London. She now lives in Hampshire, and has worked for DFID for 5 years.

From 2013-14 she was Deputy Head of DFID's Socio-Economic Development Team in Helmand, Afghanistan, where she worked alongside government authorities to help them improve the planning, budgeting and delivery and maintenance of local services – including health facilities, access to schools, access to water, electricity and road maintenance – at provincial and district level. One of the team's primary functions was also to capacity build, equipping the population with the skills necessary to plan and deliver these vital services.

Helen said:

I am very pleased that both civilians and members of the military are acknowledged by the memorial unveiled today. It was a real team effort in Afghanistan, in every sense of the word, and it's right

that this team effort is being recognised.

Her lasting memories of her time in Afghanistan are her admiration for the brave women of Helmand who put their lives on the line to make a difference – those who were involved in governing, female police officers and those who risked their lives to vote in elections.

### **Clare Moye**

Clare is from Beckenham in Kent and has worked for DFID for 17 years. From 2004-2005 she was Deputy Head of DFID's office in Basra. She returned to the country from 2009-2010, as Programme Manager for DFID's work in Southern Iraq, based in Baghdad.

Her primary objective in Basra was to ensure the safety of DFID staff there, as well as supporting the development of DFID's bilateral programmes. Whilst in Baghdad she managed a pilot youth employment programme which saw DFID working in conjunction with the Iraqi Government and local colleges to get young people into formal training: eg welding, building, sewing, mechanics, and from there into jobs.

Clare also helped monitor elections in Iraq. She remembers seeing and speaking to queues of families going to vote and they all told her how important the day was to them and their country.

I think that it is absolutely right that we are commemorating the efforts of all those who worked in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf, and not just the military personnel but the civilians too", she says.

The responses to those conflicts are on such a huge scale, take so many years and involve so many people, it is right that everyone who played a role is recognised.

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## **Press release: International Trade Minister announces 'Export Champions' to promote Midlands businesses to the world**

Midlands businesses looking to export to countries across the globe were given a boost today with the announcement of dozens of 'Export Champions' as part of a programme to encourage and inspire businesses to export

internationally.

Announced at the inaugural Midlands Engine Trade Summit, the 'Midlands Engine Export Champions Programme' sees 28 high profile business leaders from across the region offering their expertise and advice to inspire companies to export and support existing exporters looking to expand into new markets.

From vehicle manufacturer Westfield Sportscar in Kingswinford, to textiles design business The SundayGirl Company in Kidderminster, the 28 Export Champions span a wide range of sectors and services. Business leaders from these companies will provide peer to peer support and help others to fulfil their global market potential.

Speaking at the Summit in Birmingham, International Trade Minister Mark Garnier said:

We want to use the momentum of the Midlands Engine to drive this region's exports to new heights and I am delighted to announce the launch of these new champions. 28 experienced exporters based in the Midlands will work to inspire others to either export for the first time or to export more.

My department is helping even more companies in the region explore opportunities on the global market and through this Programme local business will truly benefit from a range of expert advice from local business leaders.

Export Champion and CEO of Morningside Pharmaceutical Dr Nik Kotecha said:

It is an honour to be appointed as one of the inaugural Export Champions for the Midlands. This is an incredibly exciting time for businesses across the region, and my fellow Export Champions and I are looking forward to spreading the word about the value of exporting.

The Midlands Engine has a lot to offer the world, and I look forward to raising the profile of exporting throughout the region, helping businesses to develop opportunities and fulfil their global potential."

Over 27,000 businesses across the Midlands Engine exported nearly £40 billion worth of products to over 100 countries in 2015 and the Midlands is responsible for 24% of England's manufacturing output with particular strengths in automotive, motorsport, aerospace and rail.

The creation of the Midlands Engine Export Champions Programme swiftly follows the launch of the government's [Midlands Engine Strategy](#).

An ambitious strategy to help the Midlands reach its full economic potential, the strategy has been published today as the Chancellor Philip Hammond

visited the region the day after delivering his first Budget.

It includes significant investment in skills, connectivity and local growth, while it sets out how the government plans to drive the region's huge potential and promote it to the world.

Over 500 delegates attended the Midlands Engine Trade Summit at the Vox Conference Centre where they participated in specialist workshops and heard first-hand the steps they can take to export their goods and services overseas.

In addition to engaging with SMEs and local businesses, the Export Champions will promote the Department for International Trade's Exporting is GREAT campaign and digital tool [www.great.gov.uk](http://www.great.gov.uk) which helps UK businesses break onto overseas markets. This innovative new programme will provide practical advice and support to drive further growth in exports.

The full list of Export Champions is:

1. Liz Fothergill CBE DL, Chairman, Pennine Healthcare (Derby)
2. Kevin Oakes, Chairman, Royal Crown Derby (Derby)
3. George Paul, Executive Director, Bradbury & Son (Buxton)
4. Jane Shepherd, Managing Director, Shepherd PR (Ashbourne)
5. Stuart Garner, CEO, Norton Motorcycles (UK) Ltd (Castle Donnington)
6. Dr Nik Kotecha, CEO, Morningside Pharmaceuticals (Loughborough)
7. Shahid Sheikh OBE, Managing Director, Clifton Packaging Group (Leicester)
8. Matt Gilmartin, Managing Director, Concept Smoke Screen (Boston)
9. Gary Headland, CEO, Lincoln College Group (Lincoln)
10. Malcom Hall MBE, Managing Director, Hall-Fast Industrial Supplies (Mansfield)
11. Susan Hallam, Managing Director, Hallam Internet (Nottingham)
12. Karen Prior, Group Finance Director, Anpario plc (Worksop)
13. Anil Puri, Chairman, Purico Group (Nottingham)
14. Graham Tyers, Managing Director, Newson Gale LTD (Nottingham)
15. Steve Crane, Managing Director, Business Link Japan (Corby)
16. Philip Duggan, Director, The Boss Design Group (Dudley)
17. Simon Evans MBE, Sales and Marketing Director, Moflash Signalling (Birmingham)
18. Deborah Leary OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Forensic Pathways (Birmingham)
19. Andrew Riley, Chairman, Mechatherm International (Kingswinford)
20. Ian Stokes, Managing Director, Stadi Arena (Meriden)
21. Stewart Towe CBE DL, Chairman and Managing Director, Hadley Industries plc (Smethwick)
22. Julian Turner, Chief Executive Officer, Westfield Sportscars (Kingswinford)
23. Jo Hilditch, Managing Director, Whittern Farms (Lyonshall)
24. Simon Pearson, Managing Director, Jesmonite® (Bishops Castle)
25. Elizabeth Gooch MBE, Chief Executive, eg solutions plc (Stafford)
26. Paul Morris, Founder and CEO, Addmaster (Stafford)
27. James Blakemore, Managing Director, JMB Partnership (Warwick)

## Speech: British High Commissioner's congratulatory message for Ghana at 60

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, all of us at the British High Commission offer our congratulations on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the independence of Ghana.

Ghana is one of the UK's longest-standing and strongest partners in Africa. Our vibrant, modern and forward-looking partnership is based on a close and genuine friendship. The UK and Ghana have a wide range of shared values, aspirations and interests across all spheres. In business, Blue Skies stands as a promising example of UK-Ghana business relations – a company committed to exporting cut fruit daily to the UK. It is the largest private employer in Ghana and a great, tangible example of Global Britain and how our economic cooperation can bring about mutual prosperity. And in sport, several Black Stars continue to compliment the Barclay's Premier League – one of the UK's biggest cultural exports.

The UK is enthused about the next generation of Ghanaian entrepreneurs. Through the Department for International Development, that's DFID's, ENGINE programme, the UK looks to support Ghana in the area of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) with the necessary skills and resources to improve their business plans and operations, while creating a thriving community of entrepreneurs that is vital for a successful economy.

Ghana and the UK continue to work together to achieve common goals on both domestic and global issues. A key arm of our relationship is a vibrant and creative Ghanaian Diaspora community in the UK, with well over a quarter a million British citizens of Ghanaian family heritage. Ghana is a modern, dynamic country – full of talent, and I am very proud that the UK remains a close friend.

60 years ago on Independence day itself, Ghana's founding father, Kwame Nkrumah, spoke of Ghana's parting from the UK, and I quote,

with the warmest feelings of friendship and goodwill, adding that: we enter our independence in association with Great Britain and with good relations unimpaired". May those warm sentiments of close mutual respect continue into the farthest possible future.

Please accept our very best wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the government and people of Ghana – today and in the years ahead.

Happy Birthday, Ghana!